

# Child Sexual Abuse Long-Term Consequences

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MAINE COALITION AGAINST  
SEXUAL ASSAULT

  
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**CHILDREN'S  
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CENTERS**

Child sexual abuse is a significant problem in Maine and in the United States. In 2015, over 50% of contacts with Maine's sexual assault support programs were from or about someone who experienced sexual violence under the age of 18. Because it is so underreported, we cannot determine the full extent of the impact of child sexual abuse. However, we know the impacts on victims and survivors vary and most often include long-lasting physical, mental, and emotional issues.

## Mental Health & Substance Use Consequences

Girls who are sexually abused are three times more likely to develop psychiatric disorders than girls who are not sexually abused (Day, et al., 2003; Kendler, et al., 2000; Voeltanz, et al., 1999).

Adult women who were sexually abused as a child are more than twice as likely to suffer from depression as women who were not sexually abused (Rohde, et al., 2008).

Adults with a history of child sexual abuse are more than twice as likely to report a suicide attempt (Dube, et al., 2005; Waldrop, et al., 2007).

Among male survivors, more than 70% seek psychological treatment for issues such as substance abuse, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide (Walrath, et al., 2003).

Female adult survivors of child sexual abuse are nearly three times more likely to report substance use problems (40.5% versus 14% in general population) (Simpson & Miller, 2002).

Male adult CSA victims are 2.6 times more likely to report substance use problems (65% versus 25% in general population) (Simpson & Miller, 2002).

The impacts of child sexual abuse on victims and survivors vary and most often include long-lasting physical, mental, and emotional issues.

## Physical Consequences

20-24 year-old women who were sexually abused as children were four times more likely than their non-abused peers to be diagnosed with an eating disorder (Fuemmeler, et al., 2009).

Middle-aged women who were sexually abused as children were twice as likely to be obese when compared with their non-abused peers (Rohde, et al., 2008).

Generally, adult victims of child sexual abuse have higher rates of health care utilization and report significantly more health complaints compared to adults without a CSA history (Arnow, 2004; Golding, Cooper, & George, 1997; Thompson, Arias, Basile & Desai, 2002). This is true for both self-reported doctor's visits and objective examination of medical records (Newman, et al., 2000).

Adults with a history of child sexual abuse are 30% more likely than their non-abused peers to have a serious medical condition such as diabetes, cancer, heart problems, stroke or hypertension (Sachs-Ericsson, et al., 2005).

Male sexual abuse survivors have twice the HIV-infection rate of non-abused males. In a study of HIV-infected 12-20 year olds, 41% had a sexual abuse history (Dekker, et al. 1990; Wilson, et al. 2009).

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